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Songs of Seventy—Second Series

Nature Studies

through

Shine and Shade

BY

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Prelude—To Song

OUL of Beauty whose gay carol
Falls so sweetly on my ear,
Shall thy glad and haunting music
Teach my soul that thou art dear?

Like a spirit, from the dawnlight
Murmurs through my dreams thy strain,
Swelling high, and grand, and glorious,
Dying soft and low again—
Soul and Song flow on together,
Harp-toned to Life's heaving sea,
Till my days, forgetting sadness,
Thrill with Music and with thee.

Soul of Splendor, of Apollo,
Whisper in my listening ear
And I follow, lo I follow!—
To thy life all hearts are dear.

One Summer Day

One Summer Day

HE Sun had caught
His shadow—naught
But sense of heat per=
vaded thought.

Each juicy plant,
Of life=wine scant,
Drooped fainting, with a deathward
slant;

Nor fowl nor bird
Gave song nor word—
Each trailed its plumes and was not
heard.

Alone, it seems,
From steely gleams,
Swift silent swallows skimmed the streams.

The trees stood still—
O'er vale and hill
The sultry Summer had its will,

And held in thrall
'Neath smothering pall
Life, as for life's own funeral.

Through meadows, slow
The river's flow
Glid shimmering out of long ago,

To shade its shine
'Neath elms benign
Where, udder deep, dreamed drowsy
kine—

Then, urged by thrill
Of wayward will,
Fell sounding underneath the mill,

To issue white
Again to light,
In foamy frolic as of flight.

Westward, and high
Into the sky
Dark clouds were drifting sullenly,

While lordlier, led
To statelier tread,
Moved the majestic thunderhead.

The air grew tense
In the suspense
Of an expectant indolence.

Far sounds drew near,
Till one might hear
Their airy footfalls at his ear,

While more remote
Became the note,
Flung, like coined silver, from the throat

In round balloo,
That fainter grew
While widening in the hazy blue,

To be returned,
An echo, spurned
To where the vacant silence yearned.

The Tempest

The Tempest

THEN roared a wind;
And close behind
The face and eyes of heaven grew
blind;

Though blotted woods,
In interludes,
Revealed to lightnings solitudes

That quivered back
From thunder-crack,
Extinguished in a deeper black;

And storm-smit pines
In struggling lines
Hoarse roared along their Apennines,

As through them, shed
From overhead,
The rivery rain-reek rioted;

And hurrying clouds
In huddling crowds
Fled, tatters fraying from their shrouds,

While flash, and roar,
And fierce downpour,
Made earth the tempest's threshing floor.

The Rainbow

The Rainbow

THE rain rained by—
The storm's last sigh
Ceased like an ended litany.

Cloud-tangled trees
Left to the breeze
Their ragged remnant legacies

Of lingering mist,
Released, sun-kissed
To vague and vapory amethyst.

Westward, the sky
Cleared cheerily,
A bluer brightness in its eye,

While eastward gone
The clouds rolled on,
Grumbling along the horizon.

But life found wings,
With twitterings,
And, hark!—the home-near robin
sings!

And goldenly,
Clear, measured, free,
The forest thrush's minstrelsy

Gave to the wood
Its vocal mood,
And cheered the soul of solitude.

And everywhere
The freshened air
Bore blessedness of answered prayer;

Earth's human brood
From plenitude
Of shelter out to Nature stood,

And hopefully
Across the sky
Heaven's sun earth's rainbow kissed
good-bye.

Reminiscent of Junes

Reminiscent of Junes

ONCE on an evening such as this,
Beneath this friendly maple shade
We, hand in hand, in troubled bliss
Together slow and silent strayed.
I think you thought what I must say,
And you took not your hand away.
My voice held something for you then,
Beside the voice of other men.
You let me hold you, hold you fast—
Was it for better, or for worse?
Beyond the moonlit path we passed;
I won your kisses' sweetest curse.
All this to me you once made seem
A sweet dream in a bitter dream.

The night looked down upon us there;
I saw as if I saw it not,

REMINISCENT OF JUNES

For one thing more than all was fair—
  You, whom I loved more than we thought.
Through rifts of leaves the moonlight fell
Upon your face, beloved well.
I kissed it with a fervor true;
And was it wrong I said to you
All that I said, 'twas wrong to feel
  All that I felt, more than I said:
But yet from that was no appeal.
  When the last trumpet shakes the dead
May I not rise, if of desire
Of mine you set my heart afire.

Still summer night, and peaceful skies,
  And river touched with dusk and gleam
Of night and stars, beyond you lies
  The heaven of which peace may dream;
But not for me at any cost
That rest, while what was lost was lost.
Beneath these maples' annual shade
I must remember how we strayed

Here, and betrayed with one long kiss
  Our souls, to sorrow it may be,
Which yet had retrospect of bliss
  Better than other heaven to me,
That lacks the old consent divine
Which made you for a moment mine.

The year which held our troubled bliss
  Went moaning, like a soul in pain,
Out of the world. We had learned this:
  Love. We need never learn again.
But I said, she shall feel no wrong
For love's sake—I will suffer long
Ere I bring shadow on her soul
Who gives me all things but the whole.
And thinking thus, again we strayed
  One night beneath this maple tree.
You know the offer that you made?
  You said: "Write love's one song for
    me—

You taught me this, win hope in this "—
You warmed to life our year-old kiss!

The sun drew from lone Memnon's lips
  Th' eternal music of the morn—
On granite, silent, in eclipse,
  Light smote, and melody was born:
But can your brightness from me bring
A worthy, joy-born offering?
Yet from my lips, touched by yours, take
Such music as such love can make:

Song

BEFORE me lies a calm and quiet bay,
Enshrining many flower-scented islands,
And o'er the waves the murmuring ripples play
In sunshine, or the shadow of green highlands.
I watch the sails, soft swelling in the wind;
I watch the move of the mysterious river;
I watch some foamy wake, dying behind:
Life, and the Stream of Life, for aye and ever!

I have a boat, a neat and handsome craft,
With new strong sails, and dainty pennons flowing,
And she is rigged both forward and abaft
To court the softest breeze that e'er went blowing;

But trim and gallant, she can breast a storm,
Can ride the billow in life's wintry weather,
And she hath cabins fairy-like and warm:
Come, love—should we not sail Life's voyage together?

Come to the cabin—whisper as a lute
The word for which my life awaiting yearneth.
My heart stands still with hope, ardent but mute,
And one from look and tone quick lessons learneth.
Those were enough. If thou hadst answered no,
And bid me wander on, to thee a stranger,
Even the tone would hold me here below,
But leave my ship a chartless billow ranger.

O noble Ship of Life, I am a god—
My cabin is my heaven; there be my angel.
At the inner shrine no feet but ours have trod—
There thou shalt read to me the heart's evangel.
Let him who dares the silken curtain move,
To cheat one love-glance from thine eye of beauty,
Or seek to dim the brightness of thy love,
Thy glance shall teach him shame, thy anger duty!

Upon some bright and sun-sought summer morn,
Before the dawnlight wakes upon the water,
While hangs upon the new moon's silver horn

A bright young star, chaste Dian's only daughter;
A little hand shall wake thee from thy sleep,
A voice shall call to thee, but not in sadness,
And while the star and crescent find the deep,
Ye shall arise in glory and in gladness;

And when I turn me from my watch above,
And leave the stars dissolving in the ether,
To kiss the slumber from thine eyelids, love,
And find two glorious morns have dawned together,
O Queen of Soul, there may I praise, with thee,
That guidest heavenward little feet soft pressing,

The ruler of a happy destiny
  Which crowneth love with its all-crowning blessing!

Again the moon from crescent grows
  To fulness, and the river bright
In stars beneath it. Give the rose
  Your lips are, for our pure delight
Of life in all the coming years,
That peace may shine, where first were tears.

Wooings of the Wind

Wooings of the Wind

A MAIDEN lay 'neath the rustling trees,
All dreamily lay there,
And fitfully the southern breeze
Was lifting her loosened hair.
It stooped to her brow with a balmy salute,
And the maiden smiled, but still was mute.
It stole to her bosom, then back to her lips,
And scattered blush roses all over her cheek;
It brushed a tear from her eyelash tips
Ere the maid to the breeze would speak.

MAIDEN.

Whence comest thou, toying wanton?

WIND.

From the South.

MAIDEN.

What wilt thou?

WIND.

Fifty kisses from thy mouth.

MAIDEN.

And what wilt thou if I will give thee kisses?

WIND.

Ask fifty more of fifty other Misses.

MAIDEN.

What then?

WIND.

I'll haste toward the rising sun,
And warm a cold heart on Mount Washington.

MAIDEN.

Where has thou been, sweet wanderer of the South?

WIND.

Where have I been? O'er every maiden's mouth
From Mexico to this the Old Dominion,

And I've a thousand kisses on each pinion.
The passion hearted 'neath these passion skies
Have given me kisses, some have given sighs;
Kisses to melt and sighs to keep that melted
Which stands upon the mountain, snowy belted.
Through all the Southern Land, from lake to ocean,
I've stolen lovers' heart-throbs for my motion.
I've lain upon the Creole maiden's breast
And warmed me with her tenderest thoughts, and rest
Has never held me but when I might lie
Bathed in the warmth of some heart's Italy.
Perfumé and sunshine, many a failing breath
That wandered when young hearts were wedding death;

Kisses from lips that kissing scarcely met;
Kisses from brides with swooning eyes tear-wet;
Warmth from all hearts that ever beat for love;
Passion from claspings seen but from above—
All these are mine; and I will melt that One
Who stands so cold upon Mount Washington.

MAIDEN.

Who is this One, who thus, while Summer lies
Warm over all beneath the Southern skies,
Stands on the mountain glittering with day?
He cannot turn from thy hot breath away.
Tell me his name, and I will give my heart,
My love, to bear in thy warm wooings part.
I'll give thee sighs, the heat of dropping tears,

The moon-watched longings of my maiden years,
All that can ever twine itself with youth,
If thou his name wilt tell to me in truth.

WIND.

Well, swear to me by all that thou hast wanted,
To keep the name, when I thy wish have granted,
And while thou givest all thou can'st to me
I'll tell the name of him I love to thee.
But kiss a ripple of thy spicy hair
And give the oath.

MAIDEN.

Do'st doubt me? Well, I swear!

WIND.

And thus I tell thee: On Mount Washington,
Far to the North, where colder shines the sun,

WOOINGS OF THE WIND

I crept all shivering, the other day,
For I had wandered far in venturous play,
And there, above a dark and frowning cliff
With rock-strewn base, and peak like Teneriffe,
Stood a grand being. On his mighty brow
He wore a cap or crest as white as snow,
That glistened like a myriad of stars;
And ever from between his helmet bars
His steady eyes gazed, wonderous and bold,
Towards the South—and oh, how cold! how cold!
He bore no spear, but in one hand he clasped
A branchless pine, half splintered by the blast,
And in the other held he up to view
A crown bediamonded with starry dew;
And deep within were words of frozen flame:

I read—he smiled. The Ice King is his name!

MAIDEN.

Ah! What wilt thou with this cold-hearted king,
Who sits enthroned on Winter's ruining?
Wilt breathe on him the summer of thy breath?
He'll chill thee with a touch, as cold as death.
Or couldst thou woo him from his regal throne,
That regal is but while he rules alone,
Thou wouldst not love him, for he would not be
The mighty monarch thou hast told to me.
Thy kiss would melt the splendor of his crown;
Thy passion steal majesty from his frown—
Weaken the grasp that rivets on the North

The frozen glory which his breath sends forth
O'er all her thousand bright and sparkling streams,
Binding a double slumber o'er their dreams.

A few there are, and such we sometimes see,
Enthroned upon their own nobility.
Such never love, save in that higher sphere
Where not too oft an equal doth appear—
Alone, but proud in being thus alone,
To sway the realm whose lustre is their own.
If gods would mingle with a mortal throng
Few would acknowledge them as gods, ere-long;
And strongest does their will upon us bind
When separate most they are from all mankind.

WIND.

What then is Love?

MAIDEN.

What no one word hath spoken—
The surge of sap that is the blood of Spring,
Through Sun-glow that somewhere is never broken
Since Life with soul to soar, had blood to sting.
How can I breathe what Love is, when its passion
Is more than I—aye, more than all of me;
More than I ever was or can be; fashion
Of wedded force divine—He that is She!
For Life is born of Love; and when Life, riven
By fragment perishes, and is forgot,
By fragment saved in some restoring heaven,
Love will keep all, as if our lives were not.
Love is the saneness that preserves who doubt it;

In us outlives its loan, of little store,
So that we cannot live nor die without it;
For our Always is Love's Forevermore.

WIND.

But, ask the bulbul why it singeth only
Its sweetest song where its one rose doth bloom,
And among other flowers pineth lonely,
Like wandering spirits that have lost the tomb.
Can love bear incense to a pure heart-shrine
To mock it, and to sadden it by passing?
No—and its sweetest treasures must be mine
If innocence remains with love's amassing.

MAIDEN.

Woo or be wooed—and thou will learn, beside:
Love most immortal is when most unsatisfied.

Gates of Rest

Refrain—Sunset

CAST 'round me lies the great World
like a ring;
And on its thither edge the half-hid Sun,
Set in the midst of amethystine clouds,
Heaven's one immortal diamond, gleams and
flames!

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